

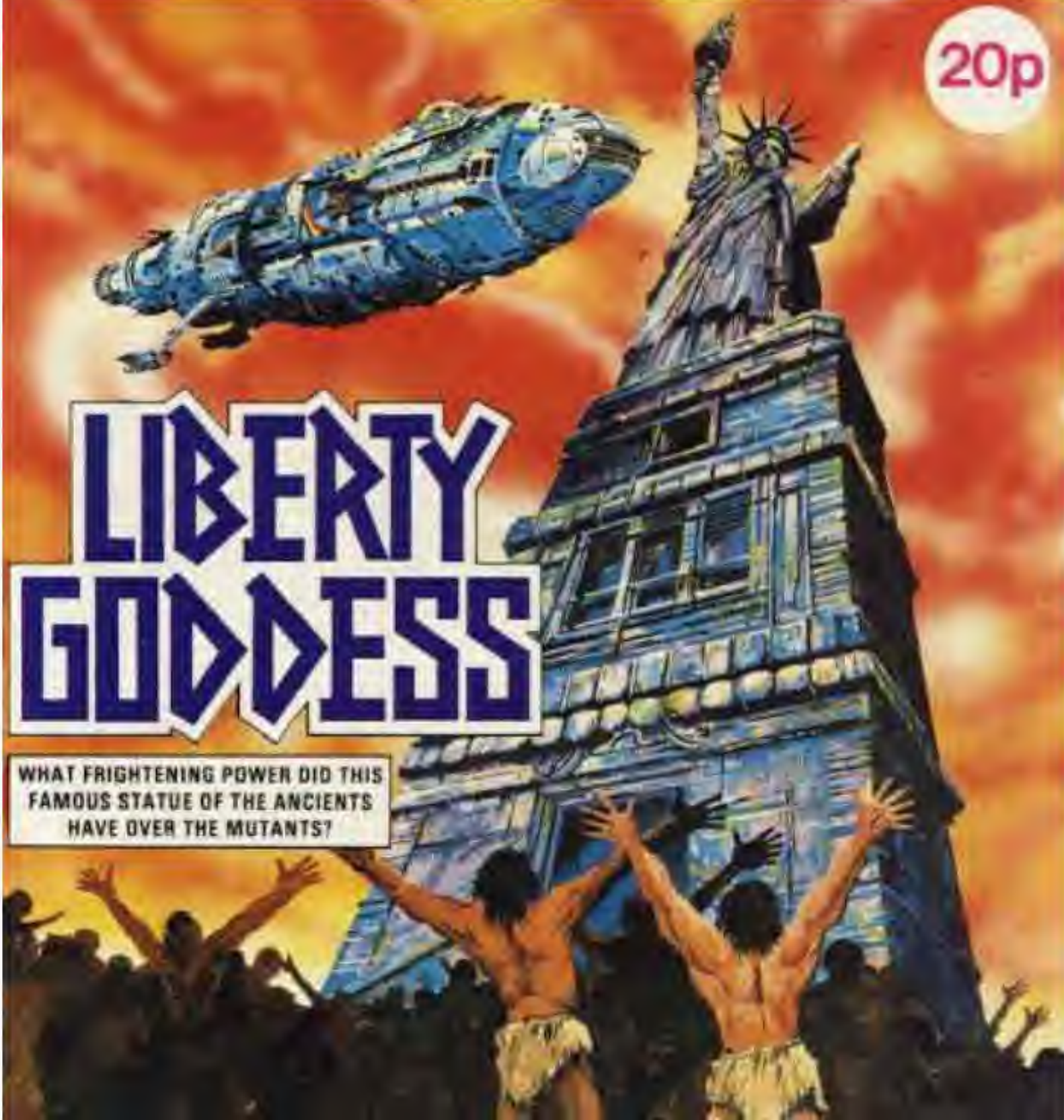
STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No 115

20p

LIBERTY GODDESS

WHAT FRIGHTENING POWER DID THIS
FAMOUS STATUE OF THE ANCIENTS
HAVE OVER THE MUTANTS?



STARBLAZER

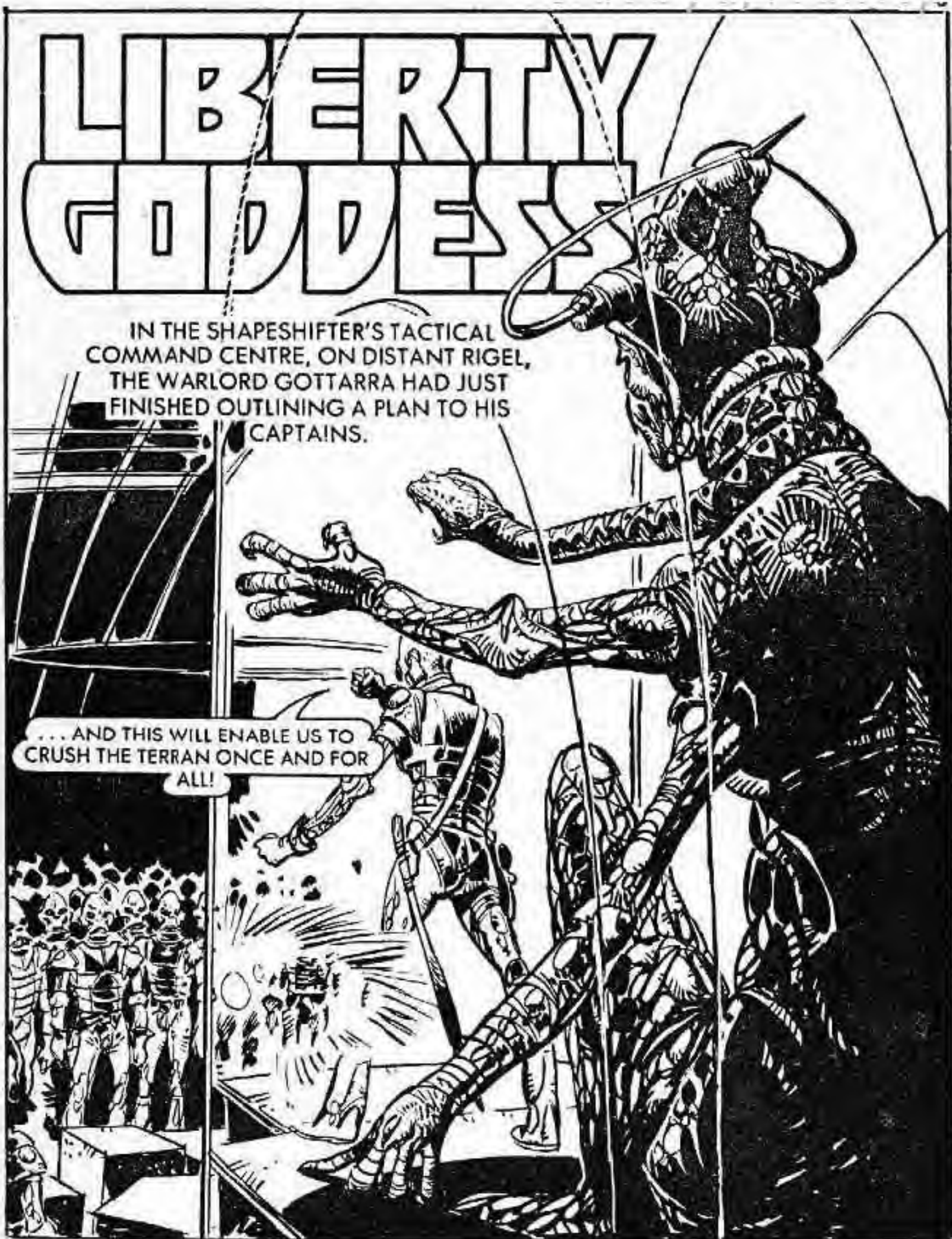


THIS STORY STARTS IN A GALAXY FAR, FAR AWAY — THE YEAR IS 2130: SEVENTY YEARS PREVIOUSLY THE EARTH HAD BEEN DEVASTATED IN A SURPRISE ATTACK BY THE SHAPESHIFTERS FROM THE PLANET RIGEL — A RACE OF WARLIKE ALIENS WITH THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE. THE WAR RAGED ON WITH HUMANITY PUSHING THE SHAPESHIFTERS BACK, FIGHTING FROM WELL-FORTIFIED COLONIES ON OTHER PLANETS AND THEIR SATELLITES IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM, THE EARTH GOVERNMENT BEGAN TO MAKE SOME HEADWAY. AGENTS INFILTRATED MANY SHAPESHIFTER STRONGHOLDS IN AN ATTEMPT TO SEEK VITAL INFORMATION.

LIBERTY GODDESS

IN THE SHAPESHIFTER'S TACTICAL
COMMAND CENTRE, ON DISTANT RIGEL,
THE WARLORD GOTTARRA HAD JUST
FINISHED OUTLINING A PLAN TO HIS
CAPTAINS.

... AND THIS WILL ENABLE US TO
CRUSH THE TERRAN ONCE AND FOR
ALL!



GOTTARRA WAS UNAWARE THAT CAL BROGAN, ONE OF EARTH'S TOP AGENTS, HAD INFILTRATED THE MEETING DISGUISED AS A SHAPESHIFTER.



I MUST WARN EARTH! IF THIS PLAN GOES AHEAD, THEY'LL BE ABLE TO WIPE OUT EVERY COLONY IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM IN ONE DEVASTATING SWEEP!



AND NOW, IN HONOUR OF OUR GOD, ANTARCH, AND IN PRAYER FOR VICTORY, WE WILL ASSUME HIS BLESSED FORM!

THE SHAPESHIFTERS CHANGED THEIR FORM, BUT BROGAN COULDN'T —



BROGAN BLASTED HIS WAY OUT AND MADE FOR HIS CONCEALED SHIP.



BROGAN REACHED HIS SMALL ESCAPE CRAFT—

HE MUSTN'T ESCAPE!



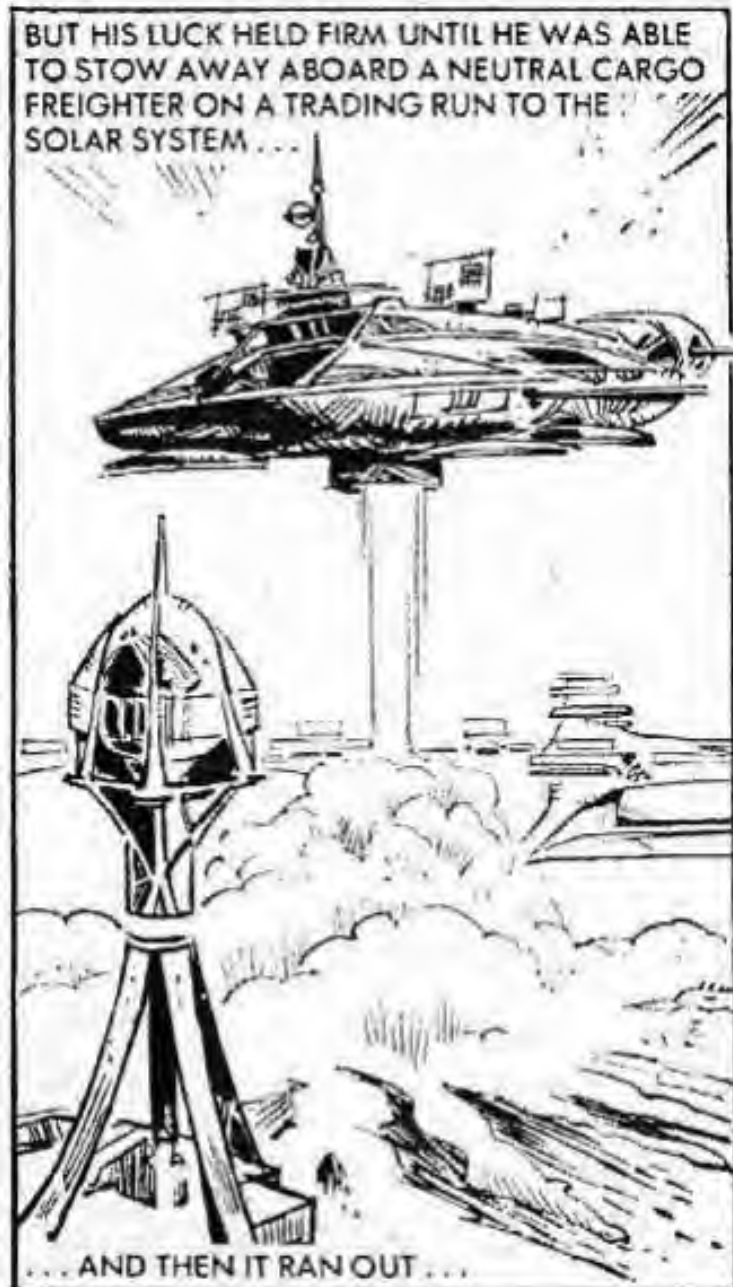
BUT BROGAN DID ESCAPE, AND FOR MONTHS HOPPED FROM PLANET TO PLANET. NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES HE SWITCHED SHIPS OR LAID LOW ON A NEUTRAL WORLD, THEY ALWAYS SEEMED TO FIND HIM AGAIN . . .



... NO MATTER HOW MANY TIGHT CORNERS HE MANAGED TO FIGHT HIS WAY OUT OF, THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE SHAPESHIFTERS TO HUNT HIM DOWN ...



BUT HIS LUCK HELD FIRM UNTIL HE WAS ABLE TO STOW AWAY ABOARD A NEUTRAL CARGO FREIGHTER ON A TRADING RUN TO THE SOLAR SYSTEM ...



... AND THEN IT RAN OUT ...

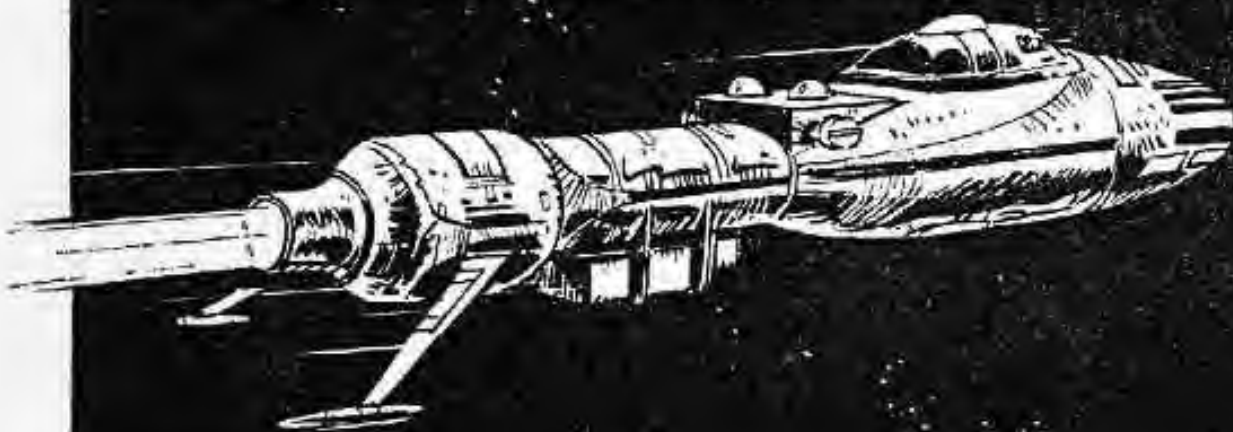
THE SHAPESHIFTERS CAUGHT UP WITH THE FREIGHTER ONLY A COUPLE OF LIGHT YEARS OUTSIDE THE SOLAR SYSTEM.



THAT TAKES CARE OF THE HUMAN!
GOTTARRA'S PLAN IS A SECRET AGAIN!



NEARLY A MONTH LATER, A SMALL CARGO SHUTTLE WAS ON ROUTE FROM GANYMEDE
TO THE MARE NUMIUM MINING COMPLEX ON LUNA WHEN IT PICKED UP AN S.O.S. ...



JOHN LEIGH, THE CARGO SHUTTLE'S YOUNG SURVEILLANCE OFFICER, QUICKLY SUMMED UP THE SITUATION —

THE SIGNAL IS VERY WEAK, BUT IT'S COMING FROM CLOSE BY, SIR. SENSORS INDICATE IT'S A LIFEPOD — ONE LIFE READING, AND IT'S HUMAN!

COMMANDER ADAMSON GAVE THE ORDER FOR THE LIFEPOD TO BE SECURED AND BROUGHT INSIDE THE CARGO HOLD . . .

THE DAMAGE LOOKS PRETTY SEVERE. WINCH IT IN CAREFULLY, OR IT'LL BREAK UP!



MINUTES LATER, IN THE CARGO HOLD, THE CREW FORCED OPEN THE HATCH OF THE LIFEPOD...

WHOEVER'S IN THERE
IS IN A BAD WAY!

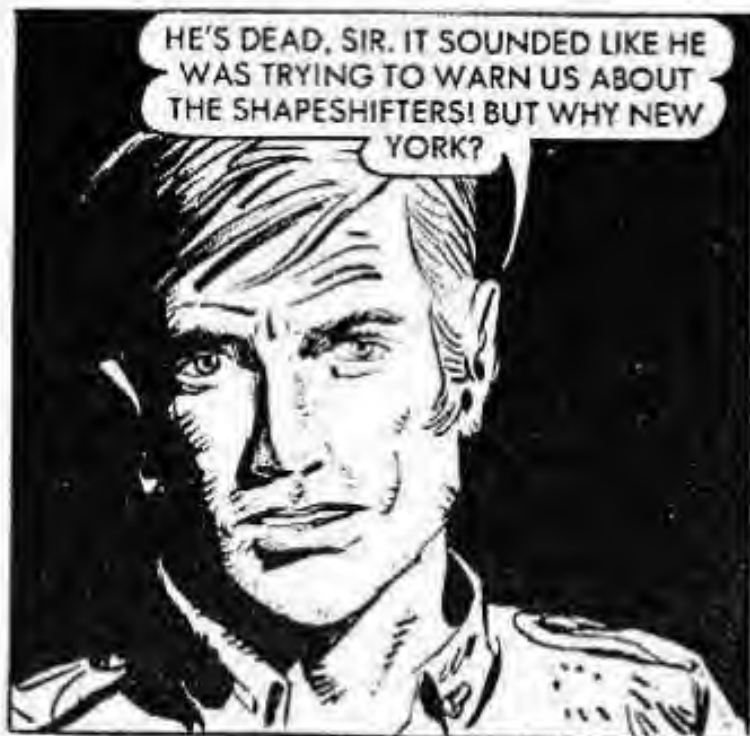


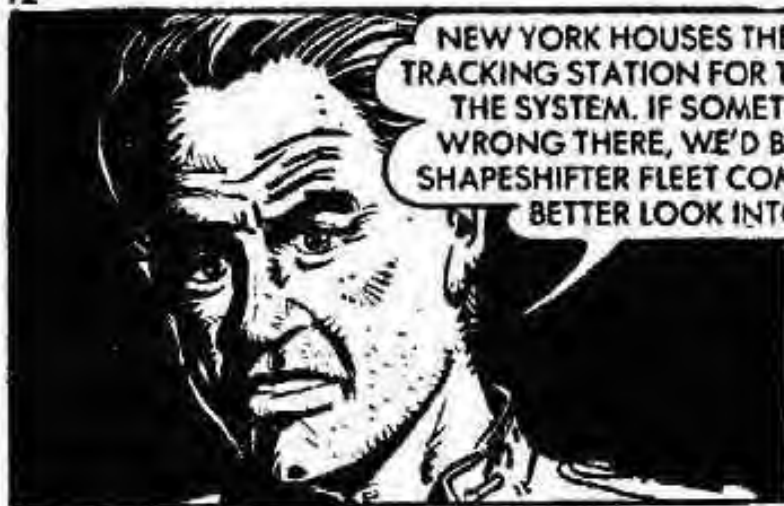
THEY FOUND BROGAN INSIDE THE POD. HE WAS DYING, BUT ABLE TO GASP ONE FINAL WARNING...

TELL EARTH... SHIFTERS... NEW
YORK!... NEW YORK... STA...



HE'S DEAD, SIR. IT SOUNDED LIKE HE
WAS TRYING TO WARN US ABOUT
THE SHAPESHIFTERS! BUT WHY NEW
YORK?

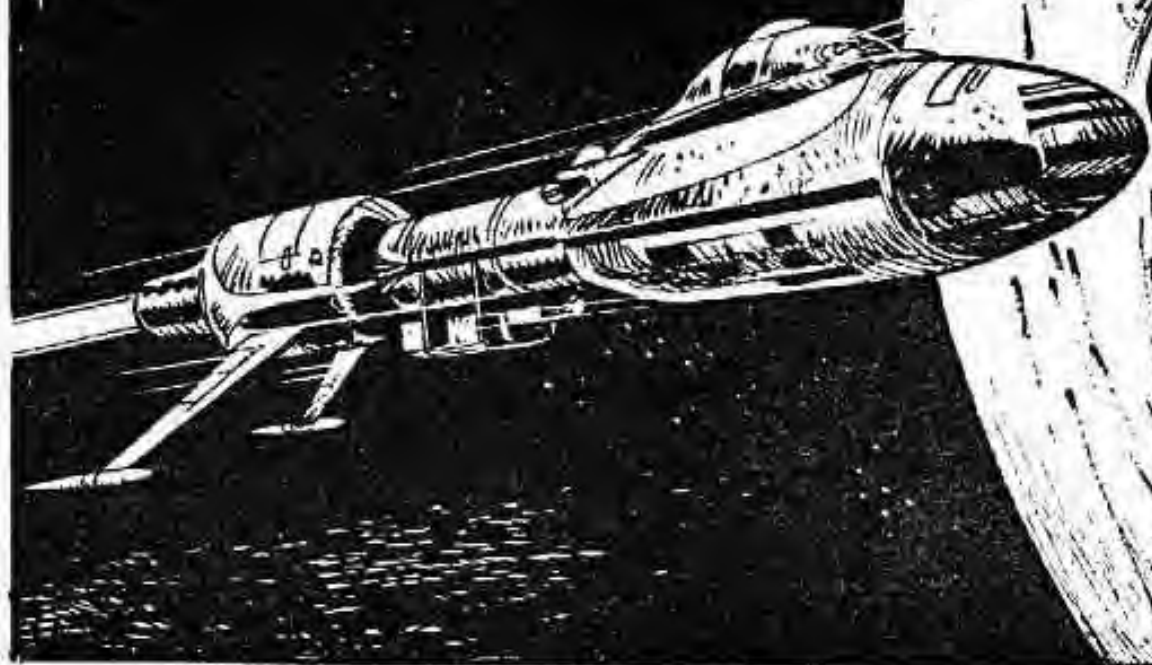




NEW YORK HOUSES THE DEEP SPACE TRACKING STATION FOR THIS SECTOR OF THE SYSTEM. IF SOMETHING WENT WRONG THERE, WE'D BE BLIND TO A SHAPESHIFTER FLEET COMING IN! WE'D BETTER LOOK INTO THIS!

ADAMSON SWIFTLY DECIDED TO DIVERT TO EARTH

CALLING NEW YORK CONTROL... THIS IS CARGO SHUTTLE TPD21 REQUESTING PERMISSION TO LAND ON PRIORITY ONE, OVER...



THE CARGO SHUTTLE WAS JOINED BY TWO FIGHTERS OVER MANHATTAN . . .

SCAN COMPLETED. YOU'RE
CLEAN. FOLLOW US IN, TPD21,
THE FORCE FIELD'S DOWN . . .



AFTER LANDING,
ADAMSON
EXPLAINED
WHAT HAD
HAPPENED —

I DON'T SEE HOW THE
SHAPESHIFTERS COULD EVER HOPE
TO ATTACK US HERE. THIS STATION
IS IMPREGNABLE!

NEITHER DO I... BUT
THAT WAS THE WARNING.

EVEN IF SOME MADE IT THROUGH, THE
STATION IS STILL PROTECTED. A FORCE
SHIELD WHICH COMPLETELY COVERS US
FROM A THOUSAND FEET UP ALSO
EXTENDS TO THE FLOOR OF THE BAY.

THE COMMANDER ESCORTED THEM BACK TO THEIR CRAFT.

ONE OR TWO SMALL SHAPESHIFTER CRAFT MIGHT MAKE IT TO EARTH BUT THEY'D NEVER BE ABLE TO INFILTRATE US. EVERYONE IS SCANNED ON ENTRY, JUST AS YOU WERE.



A SPECIALLY TRAINED MUTANT SERVANT CAME SCUTTLING UP WITH PAPERS FOR THE COMMANDER TO SIGN.

BUT THEY CAUGHT US BY SURPRISE ONCE, DIDN'T THEY, SIR? SURELY IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN...



THAT WAS DIFFERENT! WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE AT PEACE WITH THEM THEN!

... SO WHEN THEY ATTACKED IN THE WINTER OF 2106, WE WEREN'T EXPECTING THEM. THEY CAUGHT ALMOST OUR ENTIRE DEFENCE FORCE ON THE GROUND AND ANNIHILATED IT.



AFTER THAT THEY WERE FREE TO STRIKE AT WILL. OUR CITIES WERE DEVASTATED ...



WE HAD NO DEFENCE AGAINST THEM
ANYWHERE ON EARTH . . .



THE ATTACK LASTED A WEEK, AND LEFT
HALF THE WORLD RADIATION-SATURATED
WASTELANDS.



BUT THEY MADE THE MISTAKE OF
IGNORING OUR COLONIES ON
LUNA, MARS, AND THE MOONS
OF JUPITER AND SATURN . . .

... AND IT'S THERE WE'VE
REARMED AND PROSPERED!

WITH THE EXPLANATION OVER, COMMANDER
ADAMSON'S MEN WERE DISMISSED —







MINUTES LATER, THE FORCE SHIELD WAS LOWERED AND THE SEARCH PARTY SET OUT PAST THE STATUE OF LIBERTY AND ACROSS THE BAY . . .

THE AIR-CAR DESCENDED INTO WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN MID-TOWN MANHATTAN.



CORPORAL SCOTT VANISHED SOMEWHERE IN THIS AREA.

THE TROOPS DISEMBARKED...

BETTER COME WITH ME, SIR,
AND KEEP YOUR BLASTER HANDY!

WHY— WHAT'S SO DANGEROUS
ABOUT THIS PLACE?



THESE RUINS ARE ALIVE WITH PACKS OF MUTATED
DOGS! THEY'RE RABID AND SATURATED WITH
RADIATION!



LEIGH AND THE SERGEANT CROSSED THE STREET TO SEARCH WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN AN EXCLUSIVE DEPARTMENT STORE . . .



LEIGH CLIMBED UP TO THE TOP FLOOR WHERE
HE CAUGHT SIGHT OF A FIGURE ON THE
TOP RUNG OF A MAINTENANCE LADDER —



LEIGH RACED UP THE LADDER —



AT THE TOP, LEIGH CAME FACE TO
FACE WITH THE FIGURE —

WHAT ON EARTH...?



SUDDENLY —

NO!



THE SERGEANT HAD CIRCLED ROUND AND ARRIVED
ON THE SAME FLOOR ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS
LEIGH —



DON'T SHOOT! IT'S ONLY
A MUTANT. IT WON'T HARM YOU!

THE SERGEANT OFFERED THE CREATURE SOME CHOCOLATE. IT SNATCHED IT EAGERLY ...



MUTATED HUMANS — THEY LIVE BY THEMSELVES AND FORAGE IN THESE STORES FOR THINGS TO EAT.



IT STARTLED ME, THAT'S ALL. DIDN'T I SEE ONE IN THE TRACKING STATION TODAY?

YES! WE'VE TRAINED SOME TO DO MENIAL JOBS THERE. THEY'RE PRETTY STUPID, BUT THEY'RE CERTAINLY ...







THE AIR-CAR RETURNED TO THE TRACKING STATION...

SCAN COMPLETED! YOU'LL BE RELIEVED TO KNOW YOU'RE NOT CONTAMINATED.



LATER, AS ADAMSON AND LEIGH RAN THROUGH SOME PRE-FLIGHT CHECKS ON BOARD THEIR CARGO SHUTTLE...



WHILE YOU WERE OFF SIGHTSEEING, I TOOK ANOTHER LOOK AROUND THE STATION. IF THE SHAPESHIFTERS ARE UP TO SOMETHING HERE, I COULDN'T FIND A SINGLE TRACE OF IT.

MEANWHILE, THE TRACKING STATION'S MISSING MAN WAS FLEEING IN DESPERATION THROUGH THE EERIE, RADIATION-LIT SEWERS BENEATH MANHATTAN...

CAN'T SEE THEM! I MUST HAVE LOST THEM AT THE LAST FORK!





BEFORE HE ESCAPED, HE HAD ALREADY
TOLD US WHAT WE NEEDED TO KNOW.
HE IS OF NO FURTHER USE. KILL HIM!

THE STRANGE FIGURE DEPARTED, LEAVING THE MUTANTS TO COMPLETE THEIR TASK.

AAAA...

NEXT MORNING —

GOODBYE, COMMANDER, I STILL
CAN'T FIGURE OUT WHAT THE
SHAPESHIFTERS ARE UP TO.



A FEW MOMENTS LATER, ADAMSON CAUGHT SIGHT OF SOMETHING METALLIC GLITTERING IN THE SUNLIGHT, WEAVING ITS WAY BETWEEN THE SKYSCRAPERS BELOW.

LEIGH, LOOK,
DOWN THERE!

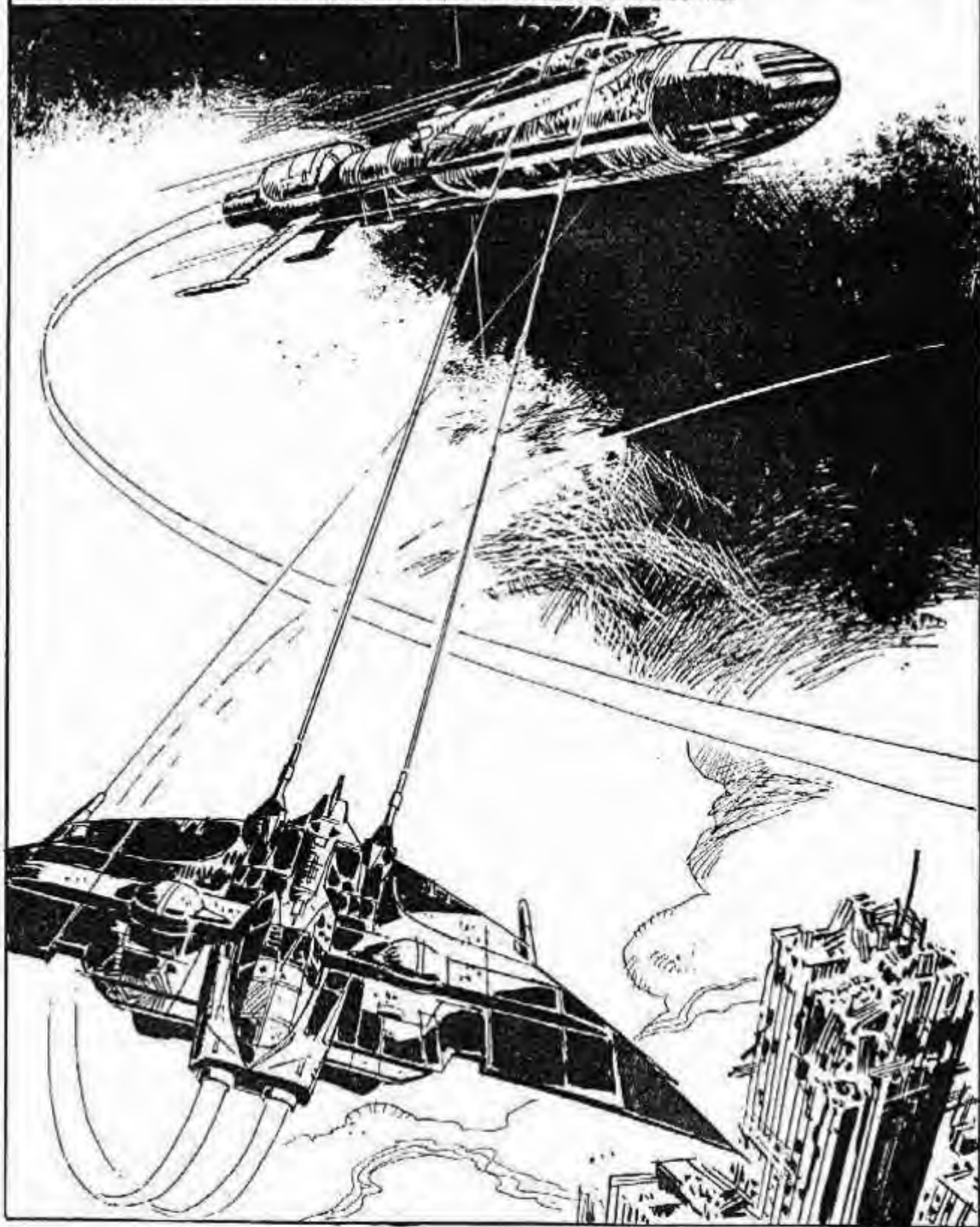


SIR, SOMETHING'S JAMMING
ALL COMMUNICATIONS!

A SHAPESHIFTER WARSHIP! AND
IT'S COMING STRAIGHT FOR US!



BOLTS OF ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE DESTRUCTIVE POWER RIPPED CLOSE BY AS ADAMSON FLUNG THE SHUTTLE ASIDE IN A DESPERATE, LAST SECOND MANOEUVRE!





HANG ON! I'M GOING TO TRY
AND SHAKE HIM OFF WITH A POWER DRIVE!

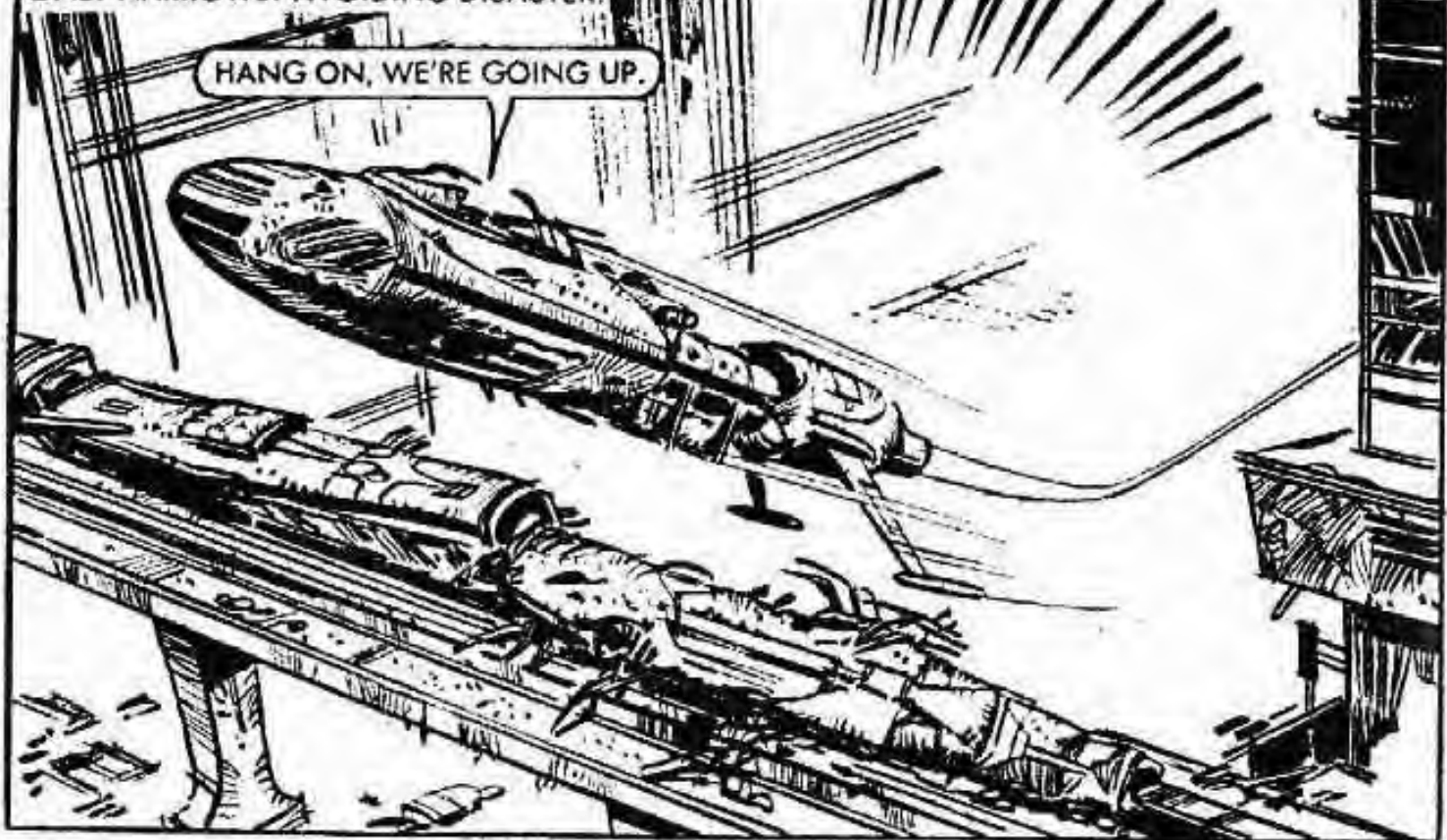
THE SURGE OF SPEED TOOK
THE SHUTTLE OUT OF THE LINE
OF FIRE.



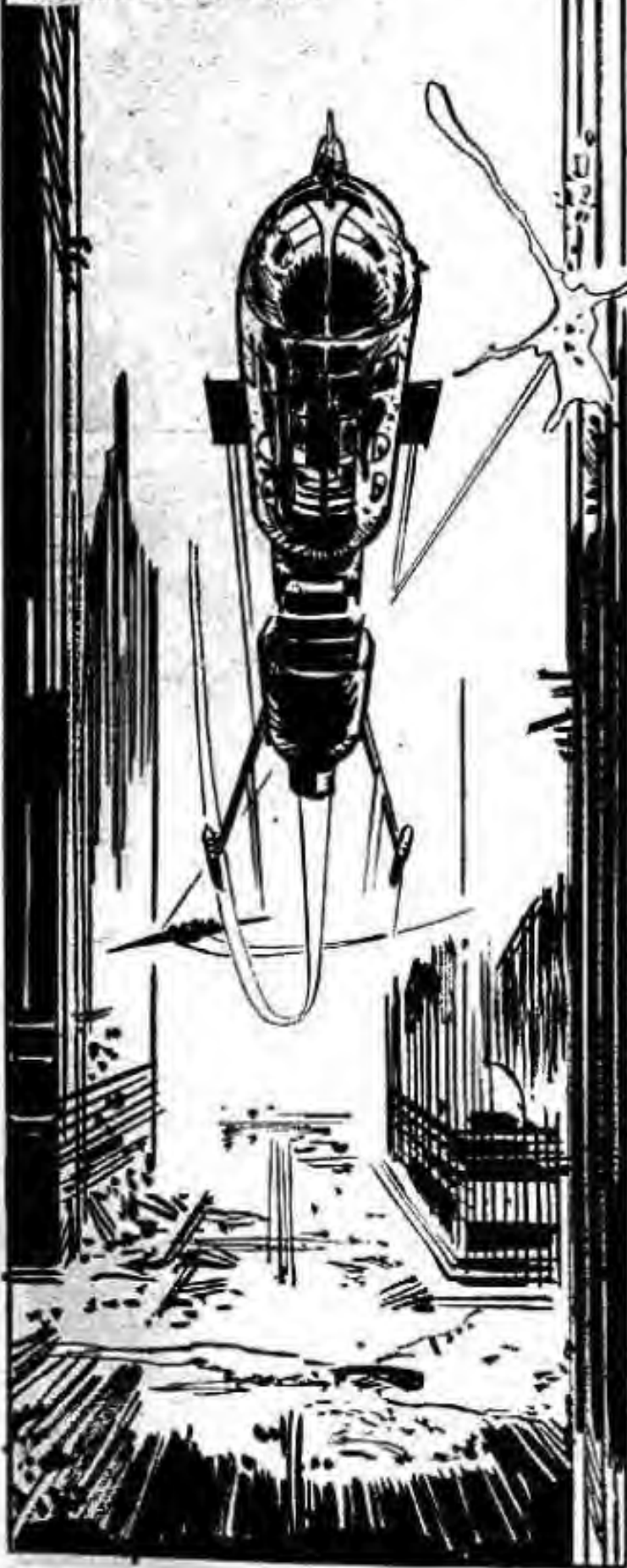
THE SHUTTLE DROPPED STILL LOWER, SKIMMING ALONG WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN BROADWAY.



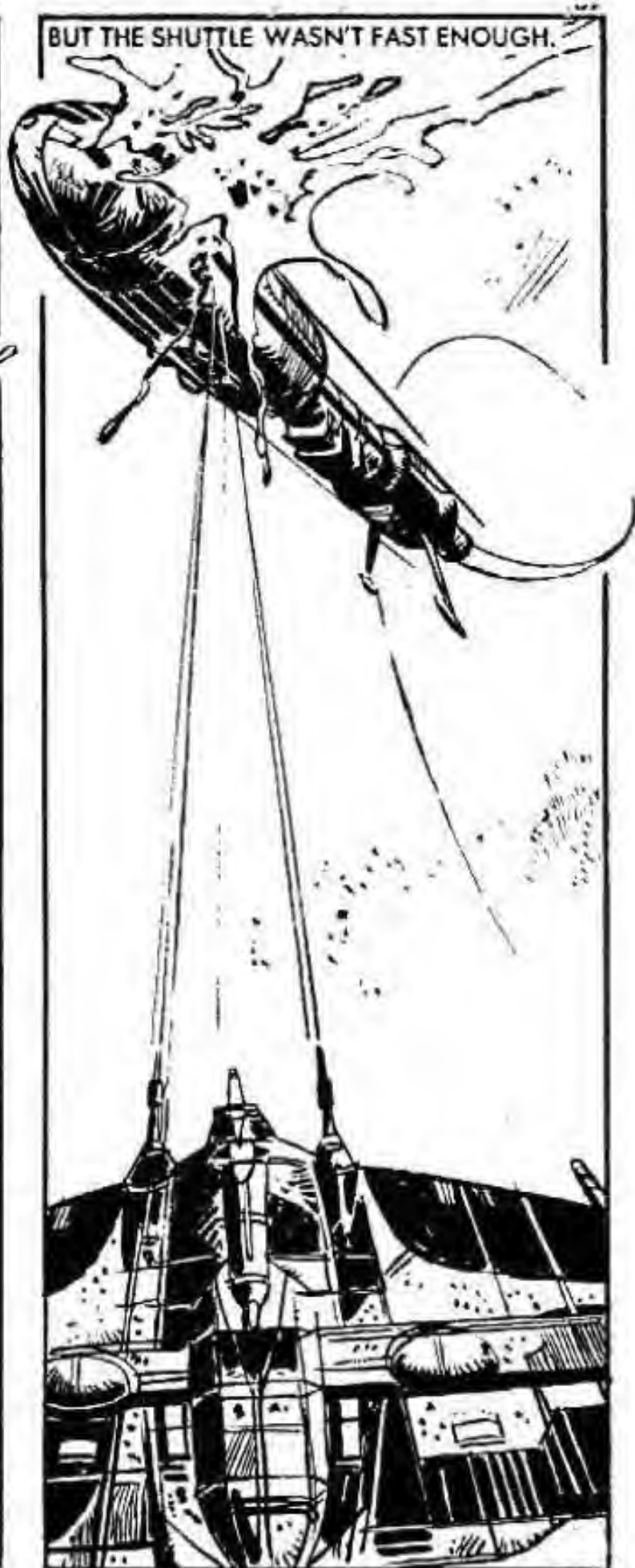
THE SHUTTLE HURTLING IN A NIGHTMARE FLIGHT ALONG THE DESOLATE CITY STREETS, ONLY NARROWLY AVOIDING DISASTER.



ADAMSON SWUNG THE SHUTTLE ROUND AND
ACCELERATED UPWARD.



BUT THE SHUTTLE WASN'T FAST ENOUGH.





THE STRICKEN CARGO SHUTTLE PLUNGED EARTHWARDS, WITH ADAMSON STRUGGLING AT THE CONTROLS. HE SUCCEEDED IN PULLING OUT OF THE DIVE AT THE LAST SECOND.



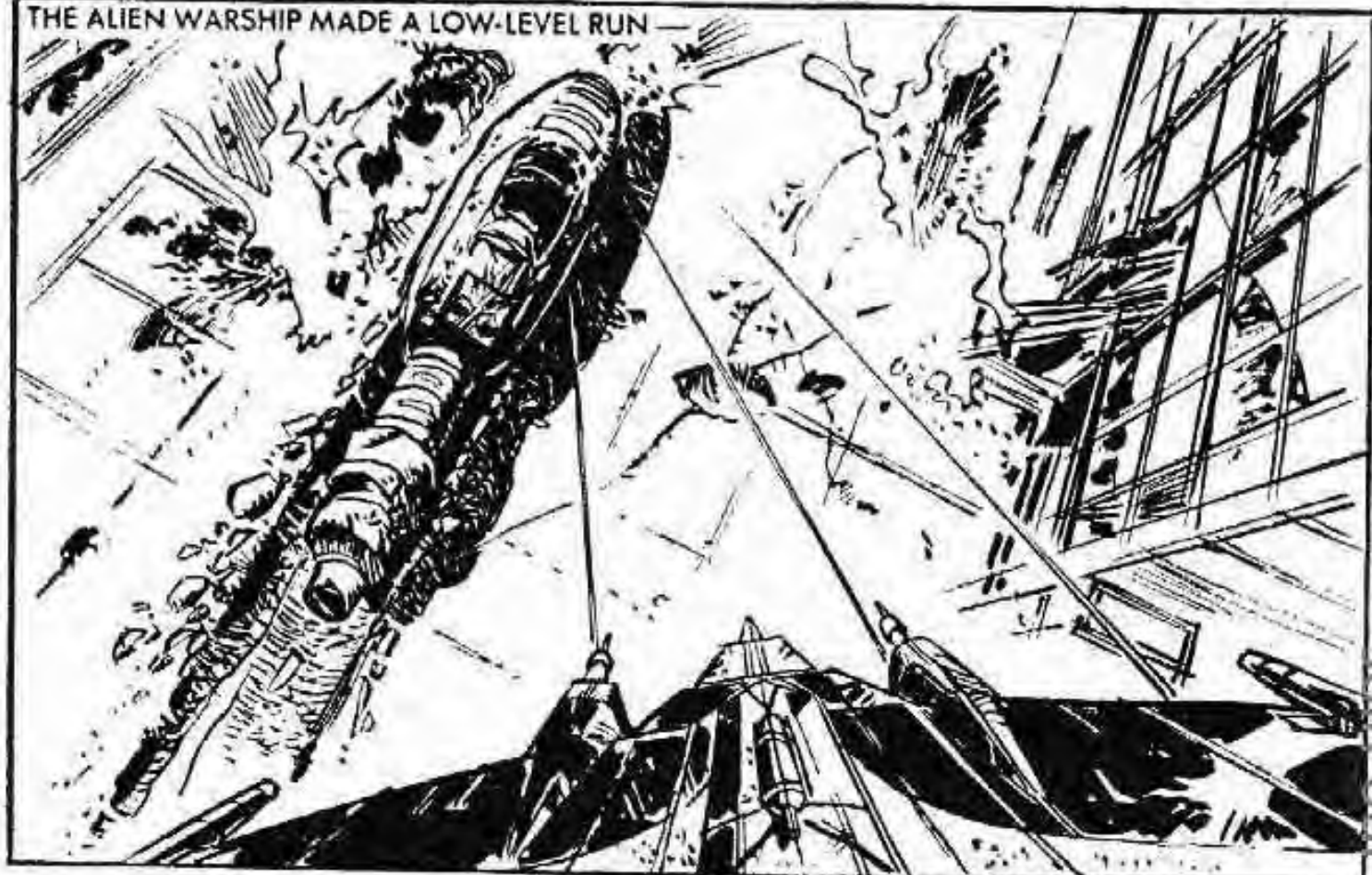
THE DAZED SURVIVORS SCRAMBLED OUT OF THE WRECK...



GET DOWN! IT'S GOING
TO FIRE AT US!



THE ALIEN WARSHIP MADE A LOW-LEVEL RUN —



MIRACULOUSLY, THE SHUTTLE CREW SURVIVED THE BOMBARDMENT, BUT ...



THE SHUTTLE CREW RAN FOR THEIR LIVES AS THE WARSHIP ATTACKED AGAIN.



THEY BURST THROUGH THE ENTRANCE AND RACED DOWN INTO THE SUBWAY STATION...



THE SUBWAY ENTRANCE TOOK
A DIRECT HIT, TRAPPING THEM
UNDERGROUND —



AS IT SWEEPED ROUND FOR ANOTHER ATTACK, THE
SHAPESHIFTER'S CRAFT WAS CAUGHT IN CROSSFIRE —

I HOPE WE GOT
HERE IN TIME.



THE ALIEN WARSHIP DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE —



BUT, BACK DOWN IN THE SUBWAY STATION —

RAND'S DEAD, SIR.

AND WE'RE WALLED IN! WE'LL
HAVE TO FIND ANOTHER WAY OUT!



THE SHUTTLE CREW DESCENDED DEEP INTO THE DERELICT STATION, WHICH WAS LIT BY AN EERIE GROUND MIST . . .

THIS PLACE IS STILL CONTAMINATED! IF WE DON'T GET OUT SOON, WE'RE AS GOOD A DEAD!!

WE'LL TRY THE TUNNELS!

BUT IN THE ACCESS TUNNEL LEADING TO THE PLATFORMS.

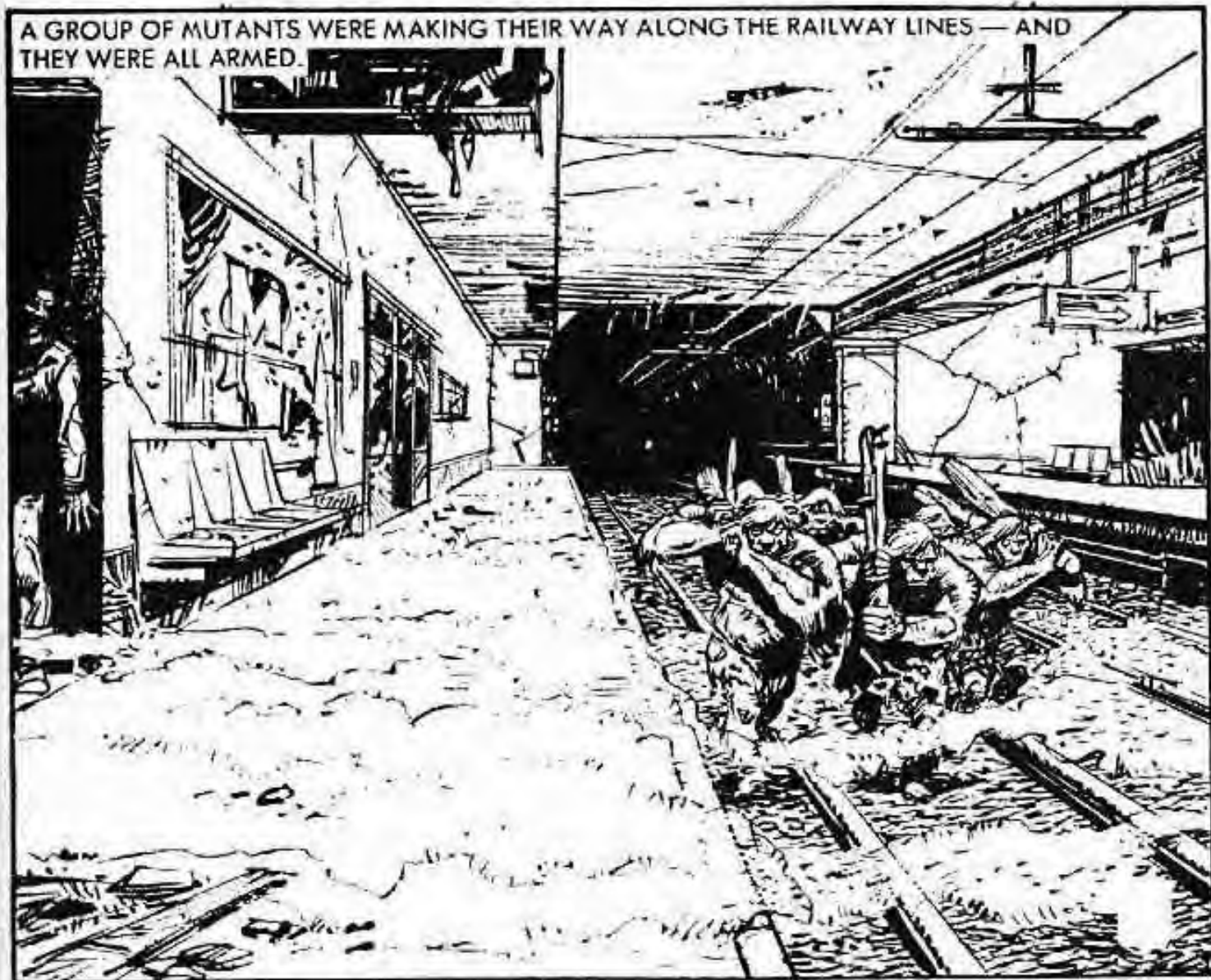
SSSSHHH! I CAN HEAR SOMETHING!

ADAMSON CREPT TO THE END OF THE ACCESS TUNNEL —



LEIGH, GET UP HERE!

A GROUP OF MUTANTS WERE MAKING THEIR WAY ALONG THE RAILWAY LINES — AND THEY WERE ALL ARMED.





THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO
BEHAVE LIKE THIS! SOMETHING'S GOING ON!



WE'LL FOLLOW THEM. MAYBE
THEY KNOW A WAY OUT.



THE SHUTTLE CREW DROPPED DOWN ON TO THE TRACKS BEHIND THE MUTANTS AND
FOLLOWED THEM AT A SAFE DISTANCE.

LOOK! THERE'S A
LIGHT UP AHEAD!

THE TUNNEL LED TO AN OLD STATION, SWARMING WITH MUTANTS.





A SHAPESHIFTER IN THE FORM OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY! THEY MUST HAVE FOUND OUT THAT THE MUTANTS WORSHIPPED HER AS A GODDESS, AND USED THAT TO ORGANISE THEM AGAINST US.



THE SHUTTLE CREW LISTENED IN HORROR TO THE SHAPESHIFTERS' PLAN. THEN . . . SOME SIXTH SENSE MADE ADAMSON LOOK BEHIND HIM.



LEIGH SPUN ROUND—



WHAT THE ...

URRRR!

LEIGH FIRED IN THE DARKNESS —



THE SOUND OF THE BLASTERS ECHOING THROUGH THE STATION ALERTED THE SHAPESHIFTERS —

HUMANS IN THE TUNNELS!
SLAY THEM, QUICKLY!



THE SHUTTLE CREW RAN FOR THEIR LIVES,
THE MUTANTS BAYING CLOSE BEHIND.



USE YOUR BLASTERS!

BACK IN THE SUBWAY STATION ...

FIRST THE HUMANS DESTROY OUR
WARSHIP AND NOW THIS! WE DARE
NOT DELAY ANY LONGER. OUR FLEET
IS ALREADY UNDERWAY, SO THE
ATTACK GOES AHEAD — NOW!
PREPARE THE HOLOGRAPHIC
PROJECTOR!



MOMENTS LATER, A CHILLING HOLOGRAPHIC SPECTRE HUNG OVER THE SKYLINE . . .

ATTACK! KILL THE HUMANS!
YOUR GODDESS COMMANDS IT!



ALMOST AS ONE THE MUTANTS REACTED — THEY HURLED MASSIVE CHUNKS OF CONCRETE FROM THE ROOFTOPS DOWN ONTO PATROLLING AIR-CARS . . .



... FOOT PATROLS IN THE RUINED CITY WERE AMBUSHED AND OVERWHELMED ...



THE BATTLES WERE BRIEF AND SAVAGE ...



DEEP UNDERGROUND, THE SHUTTLE CREW WERE STILL FLEEING FROM THE MUTANT HORDES...

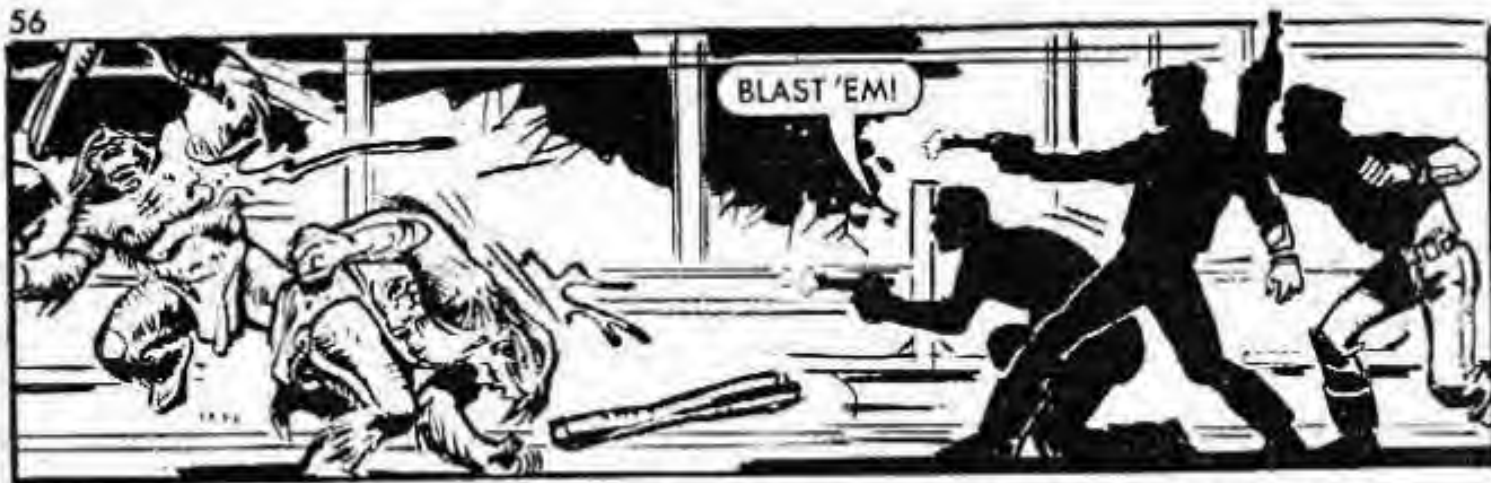
OH NO! THERE'S A WRECKED
TRAIN BLOCKING THE TUNNEL AHEAD!

THEY'RE NO MATCH FOR OUR BLASTERS,
BUT THERE'S JUST TOO MANY OF THEM!

LEIGH WRENCHED OPEN THE DOOR ON THE FIRST CARRIAGE AND THEY RACED INSIDE...







BUT WHILE THE SHUTTLE CREW WERE FIGHTING THEIR WAY BACK TO THE TRACKING STATION, THE SUPPOSEDLY 'HARMLESS' MUTANTS THERE HAD ALREADY STRUCK.



THEY WRECKED THE DELICATE MACHINERY CONTROLLING THE FORCE SHIELD —



WITH THE FORCE SHIELD KNOCKED OUT AND
THE GIANT HOLOGRAM OF THEIR 'GODDESS'
URGING THEM ON, NOTHING COULD STOP THE
THOUSANDS OF MUTANTS STORMING THE
TRACKING STATION KILLING AND DESTROYING
EVERYTHING IN THEIR PATH!



IN THE SUBWAY TUNNELS, THE MUTANTS HAD SLOWLY FORCED THE SHUTTLE'S CREW BACK THROUGH THE CARRIAGES...

THIS IS THE LAST CARRIAGE BEFORE THE ENGINE! WE'RE TRAPPED!

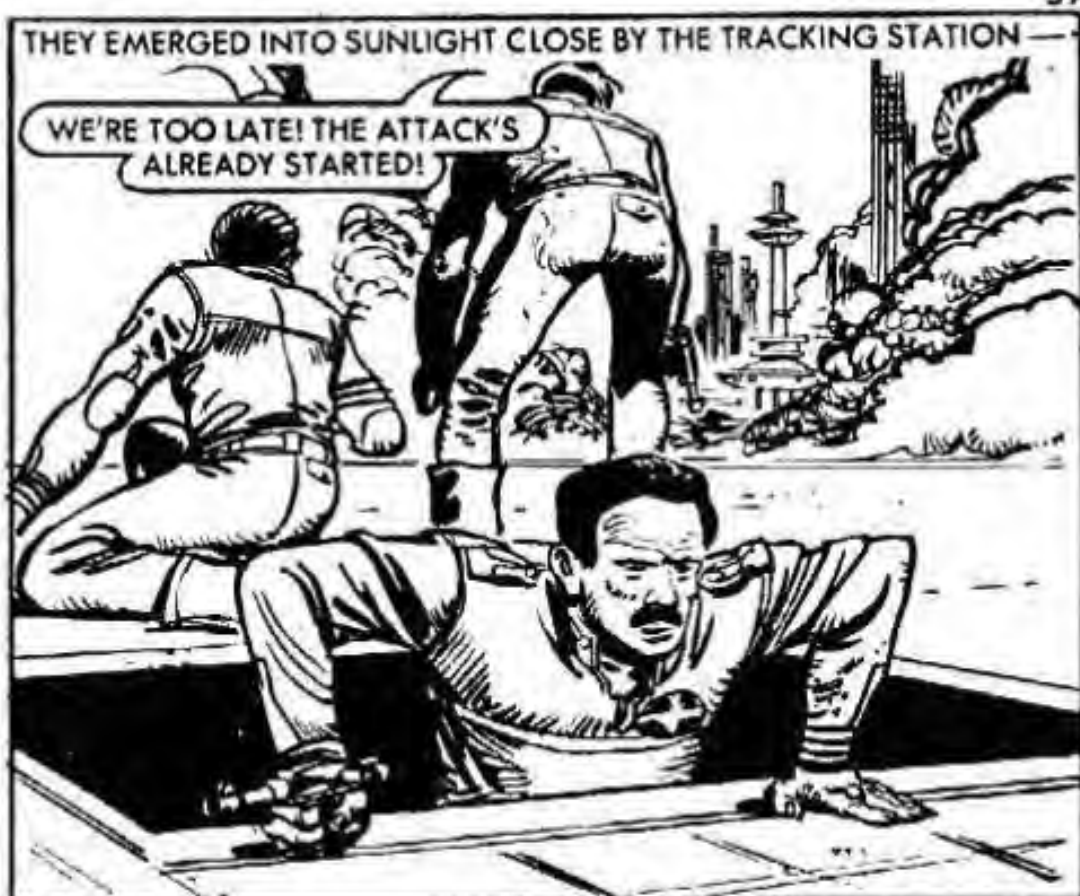
NO, LOOK—THERE'S SOME SORT OF SIDE TUNNEL OUTSIDE!



ADAMSON FORCED OPENED THE PASSENGER DOORS AND THEY JUMPED DOWN INTO THE TUNNEL AGAIN...

IT'S AN OLD VENTILATION SHAFT. COME ON, LET'S GO!









LEIGH LED THE WAY THROUGH THE CHAOS...

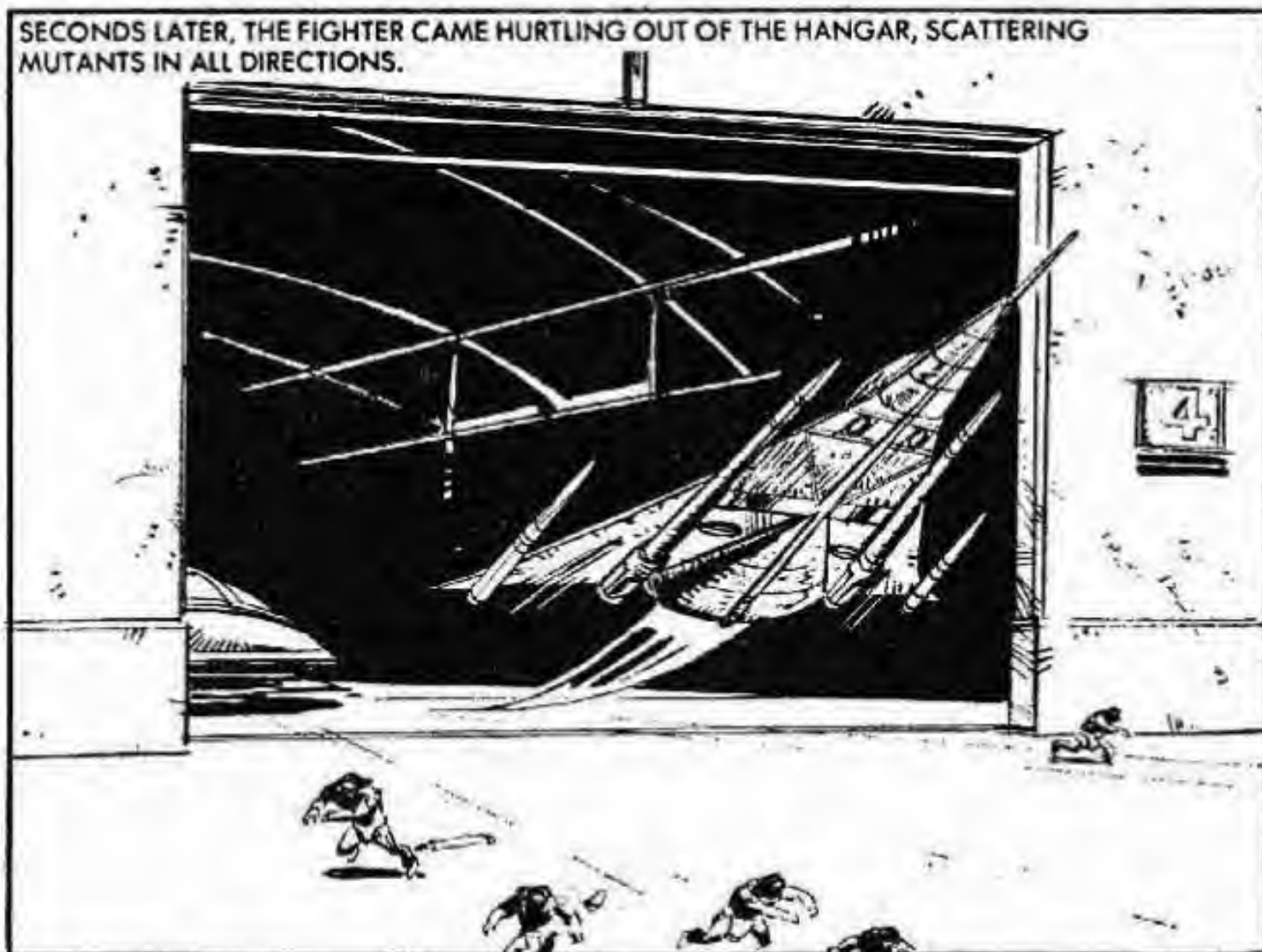


AT LAST — THE FIGHTER HANGARS.
INSIDE, WE HAVEN'T A SECOND TO
LOSE!

LEIGH CLIMBED ONTO A FIGHTER...



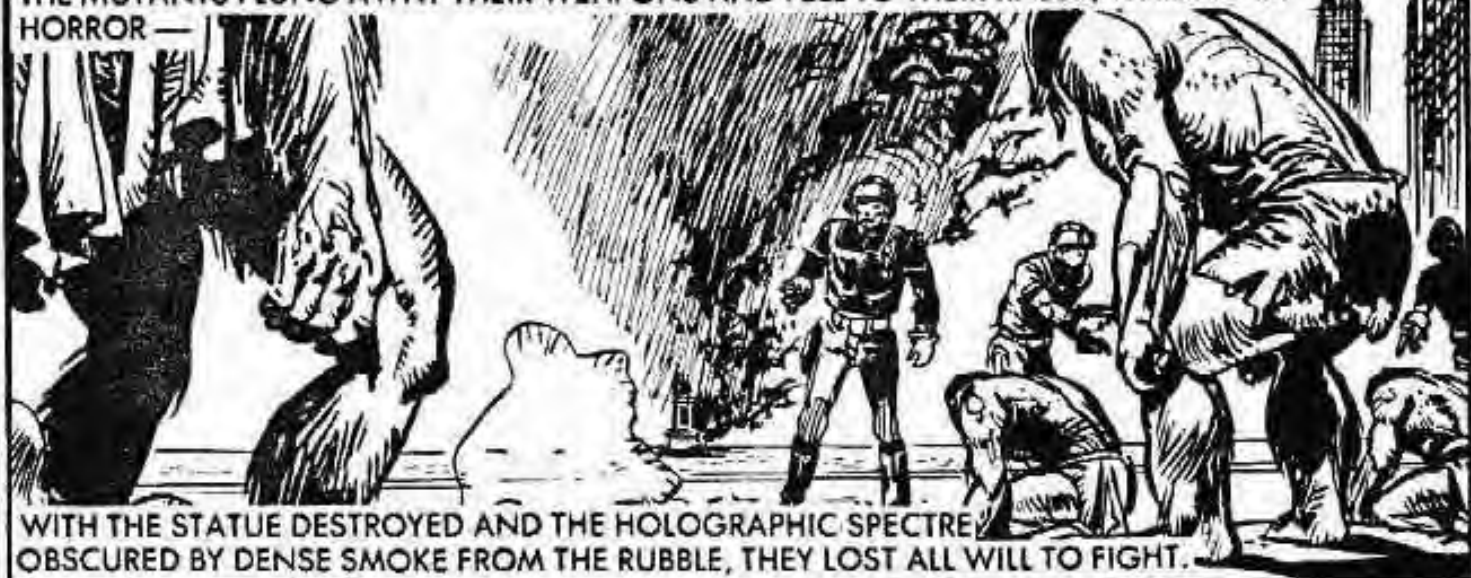
SECONDS LATER, THE FIGHTER CAME HURLING OUT OF THE HANGAR, SCATTERING MUTANTS IN ALL DIRECTIONS.



LEIGH SWUNG THE FIGHTER ROUND IN A TIGHT ARC OVER LIBERTY ISLAND, AND BLASTED THE STATUE OF LIBERTY FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH!



THE MUTANTS FLUNG AWAY THEIR WEAPONS AND FELL TO THEIR KNEES, WAILING IN HORROR —



WITH THE STATUE DESTROYED AND THE HOLOGRAPHIC SPECTRE OBSCURED BY DENSE SMOKE FROM THE RUBBLE, THEY LOST ALL WILL TO FIGHT.

ADAMSON FOUND THE STATION'S COMMANDER AND EXPLAINED WHAT HAD HAPPENED.



WITHOUT THE MUTANT HORDES TO DO THEIR FIGHTING, THE SHAPESHIFTERS IN THE SUBWAYS MEELY SURRENDERED.

NOW FOR THEIR ATTACK FLEET!



TWO DAYS LATER, LEIGH AND ADAMSON FOUND THEMSELVES ON THE COMMAND DECK OF THE FLAGSHIP 'IMPERIAL' —

THE SHAPESHIFTERS THINK THEY'LL CATCH US BY SURPRISE. THEY DON'T KNOW OUR TRACKING STATION IS STILL INTACT.



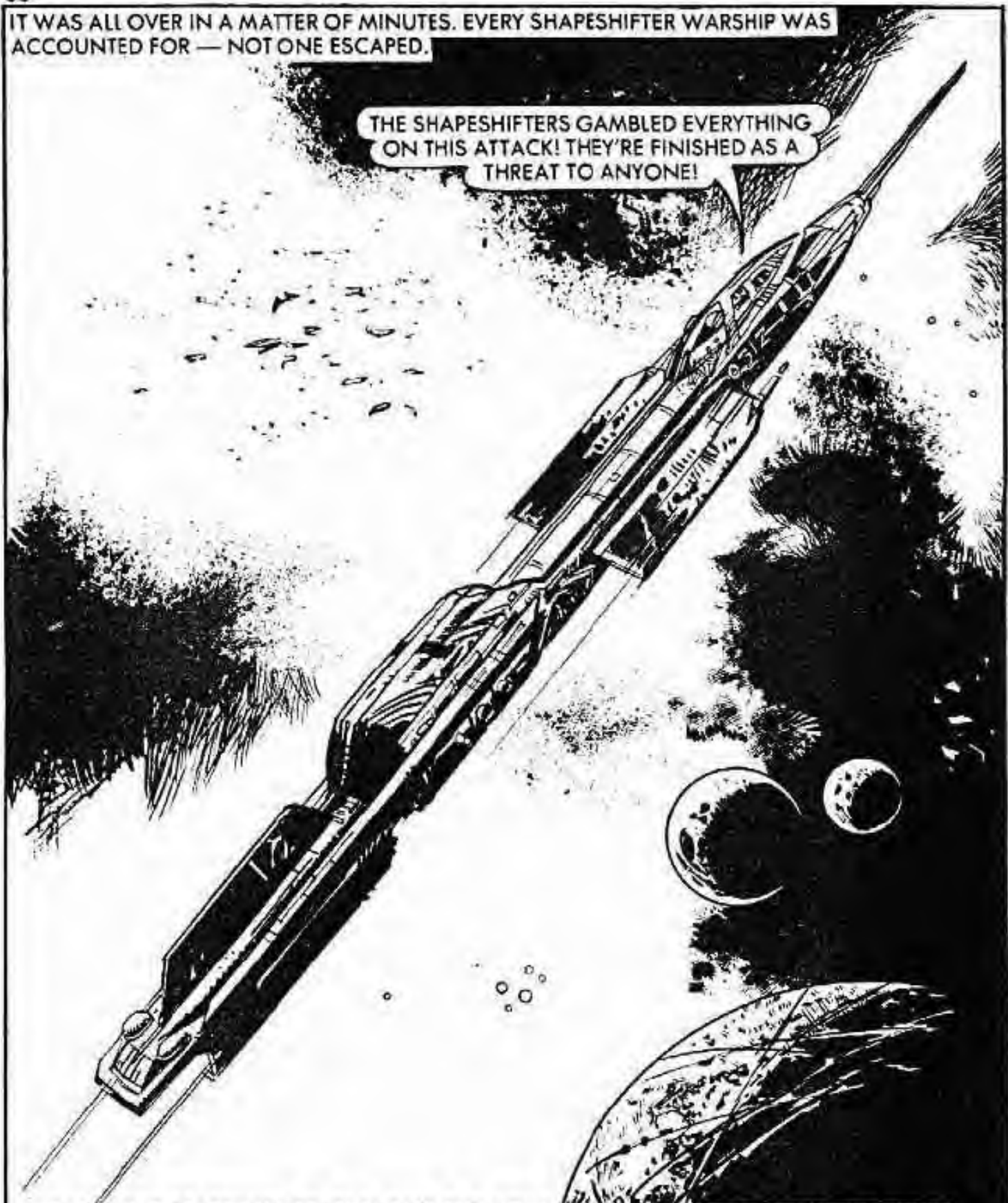
THE SPACESHIFTERS FLEW STRAIGHT INTO THE EARTH AMBUSH —



THEY HAVE THEIR SHIELDS DOWN!

IT WAS ALL OVER IN A MATTER OF MINUTES. EVERY SHAPESHIFTER WARSHIP WAS ACCOUNTED FOR — NOT ONE ESCAPED.

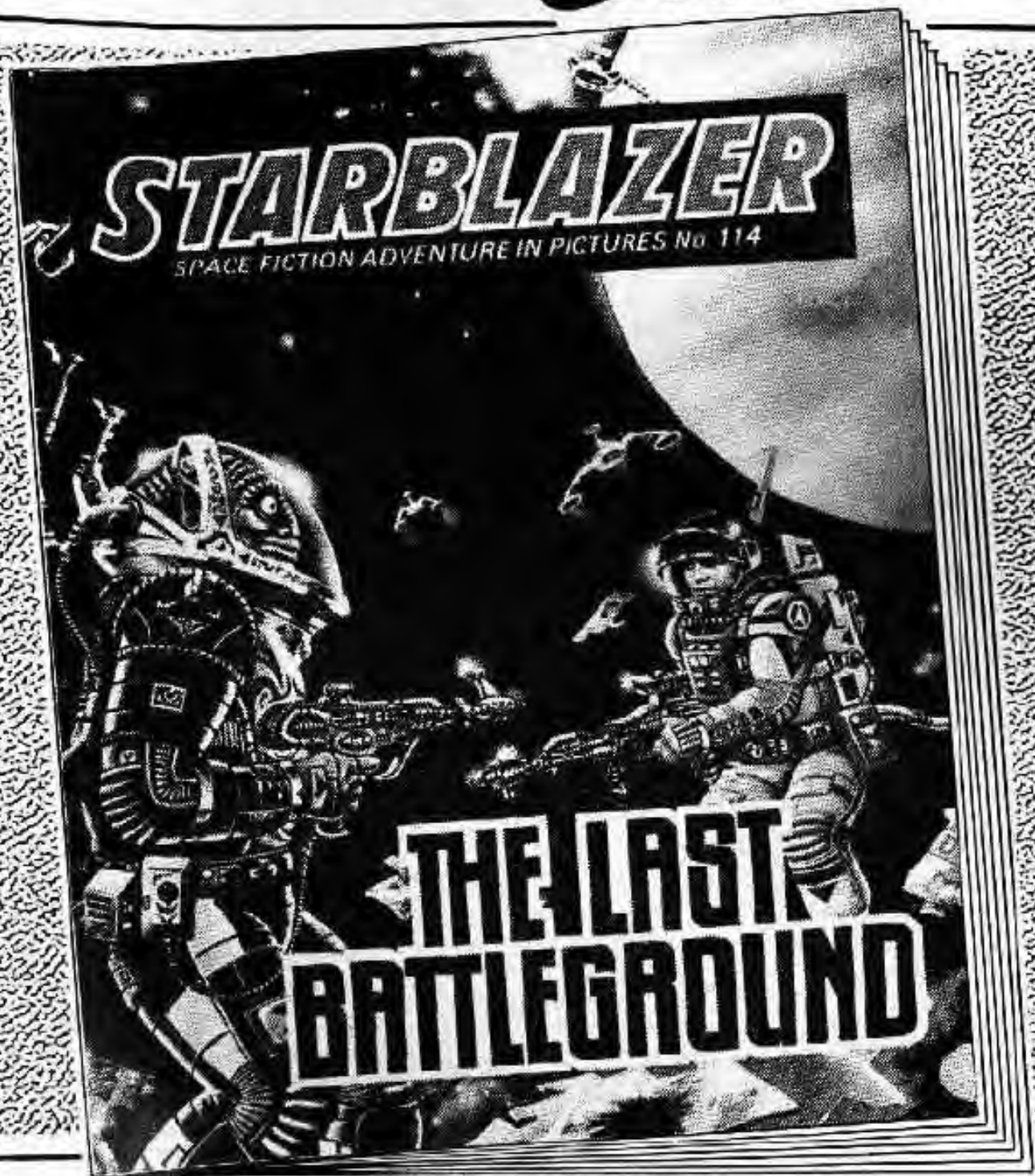
THE SHAPESHIFTERS GAMBLLED EVERYTHING ON THIS ATTACK! THEY'RE FINISHED AS A THREAT TO ANYONE!



EARTH HAD BEATEN ITS CRUEL ENEMY, BUT NOW CAME THE HARDEST BATTLE, THE FIGHT TO REBUILD A SHATTERED EMPIRE FROM THE RUINS OF A MUTATED WILDERNESS.

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MONTH'S *OTHER***



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STARBLAZER'S
GUIDE TO THE SPACEMEN 22-23



Gemini 7, which was launched on December 4, 1965, crewed by Lt. Col. Frank Borman, 37, U.S.A.F. right, and Lt. Cdr. James Arthur Lovell, Jr., 37, U.S.N. The flight lasted 13 days 18 hours 35 minutes 17 seconds. Lovell flew as Gemini 12 command pilot on November 11, 1966 on a mission lasting 3 days 22 hours 34 minutes 31 seconds, and then again with Borman around the Moon on Apollo 8. December 21, 1968 was the launch date and the flight lasted 6 days 3 hours 0 minutes 42 seconds. He was also commander of the ill-fated Apollo 13, launched April 11, 1970 and which limped home after 5 days 22 hours 54 minutes 41 seconds.